

Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

VA HANDBOOK \$330
Transmittal Sheet
August 1, 1996

VA CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN

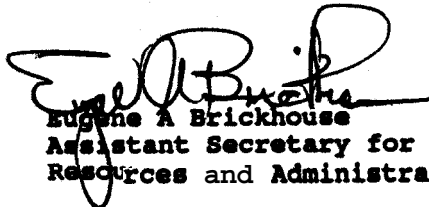
1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To provide guidance and procedures for ● rt8blfshing and administering the Department of Veterans Affairs' Career Transition Assistance Plan (VA CTAP).
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook provides guidance and procedures for providing transition assistance services and special selection priority for displaced and surplus employees when filling vacancies under the VA CTAP.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Human Resources Management.
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5330, VA Career Transition Assistance Plan.
5. **RESCISSION:** September 30, 1999, in accordance with Office of Personnel Management amendments to 5 CFR, Part 330.

CERTIFIED BY:



Nada D. Harris
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Information Resources Management

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**



Eugene A. Brickhouse
Assistant Secretary for Human
Resources and Administration

Distribution: RPC 5027 Assigned
FD Same as RPC 5007

VA CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN

CONTENTS

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE	5
2. CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES	5
3. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY FOR VA EMPLOYEES	7
4. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR SEPARATED VA EMPLOYEES	8
5. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY FOR CURRENT AND FORMER DISPLACED EMPLOYEES FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES	8
6. ANNUAL REPORTS	8
7. LABOR RELATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES	9
8. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS	9
APPENDICES	
A. ORDER OF SELECTION AND CONSIDERATION	A-1
B. SELECTION ACTIONS NOT COVERED BY 5 CFR, PART 330, SUBPART F, §330.606(b)	B-1
C. SELECTION ACTIONS NOT COVERED BY 5 CFR, PART 330, SUBPART G, §330.705(c)	C-1

VA CAREER TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PLAN**1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

a. The VA Career Transition Assistance Plan (VA CTAP) is in compliance with the September 12, 1995, White House Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Subject: Career Transition Assistance for Federal Employees, and in accordance with interim amendments to 5 CFR, Part 330, subparts B, F and 6. This Handbook conveys VA procedures and guidance on career transition assistance services to be provided to VA employees who either have been or are likely to be separated from Federal service due to downsizing. The goal of such services is to assist VA employees in taking charge of their own careers by providing them with the support they need to find other job opportunities, either with government or in the private sector. In VA, under these procedures, transition assistance services will be available to impacted permanent competitive and excepted service employees. Special selection priority, when filling competitive service vacancies, will be available to displaced and surplus competitive service employees.

b. A key feature of the Federal-wide Career Transition Assistance Plan is that employees must exercise individual initiative in pursuing other employment, both within and outside of the Federal government. Therefore, managers and supervisors, in their administration of the VA Career Transition Assistance Plan should be sensitive to the needs of impacted employees and should approve requests for reasonable excused absence to use career transition services.

2. CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES. VA Career Transition Services will be offered by facilities to all permanent competitive and non-time limited excepted service and Senior Executive Service employees affected by downsizing. These resources will assist employees in pursuing employment both within or outside the Federal Government and in managing the change process.

(a) Required Services. The following must be offered to impacted employees.

- (1) Resume writing;
- (2) Interviewing skills/techniques;
- (3) Training in preparing applications that address vacancy announcement rating factors;
- (4) Skills assessment/counseling;
- (5) Retirement counseling/training;
- (6) Employee benefits counseling/training;
- (7) Financial planning/training;

AUGUST 1, 1996

(8) Job Search Skills;

(9) **Stress** Management;

(10) Basic library of job search materials;

(11) **Access** to the Office Of Personnel Management's Federal Job Opportunities Board (FJOB);

(12) Training in the use of career transition services for employees, managers, supervisors and union representatives, **and**;

(13) Basic ADP computer training beyond that needed to facilitate use of transition services.

(b) **Other Requirements** .

(1) Employees will be allowed reasonable **excused** absence to use transition services and facilities.

(2) Separated employees will be allowed reasonable access and time to use transition services and facilities.

(3) Access to services will be provided to employees in field offices and remote sites and those with disabilities.

(4) Facilities will make full use of employee assistance programs.

(5) Facilities will provide employees with resource information on other forms of Federal, state, and local assistance which are available to support career transition for employees with disabilities.

(c) **Highly Desirable Services**. In addition to services which must be offered to affected **employees** are services which, although **not required**, may be highly desirable in some instances.

(1) "Survivor training", and/or counseling, for those who will remain in the new organization to help them adjust to changes brought **about** by downsizing;

(2) Team building;

(3) Counseling for families of impacted employees;

(4) Training in the new organizational structure, and;

(5) Job retraining where time and resources permit. This is appropriate in restructuring reductions where numbers in some occupations will be increasing.

(d) Methods of providing services Career transition assistance services may be delivered in a variety of ways: Facilities may, for example, wish to pool resources for particular services. Facilities should contact organizations, both government and private sector, to learn what techniques and options are effective in the local area.

(e) Headquarters Career Transition Center A Career Transition Center (CTC) has been established in VA Headquarters to meet the needs of Headquarters employees affected by downsizing and to serve as a source of advice and experience for field facilities assisting employees with outplacement issues. For further information, Human Resources Management offices may contact the Director, CTC, at (202) 273-6700.

3. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY FOR VA EMPLOYEES

a. Special Selection Priority is a new term for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for all non-Defense agencies. It means that an eligible applicant (one who applies and meets the criteria under the career transition assistance program) must be selected. Since our displaced and surplus employees must apply for specific vacancies, it is therefore necessary that vacancy announcements be distributed so that they have an opportunity to apply. The VA Career Transition Assistance Plan is designed to maximize employment opportunities for our displaced and surplus employees who, through no fault of their own, are adversely affected by VA restructuring and downsizing.

b. Surplus and displaced VA employees who apply for VA vacancies in their local commuting area at their current grade or a lower grade with no higher promotion potential than their current grade, and who are determined to be well-qualified for such position, must be selected. These employees are the first selection priority for VA vacancies. (See Appendix A, Order of Selection and Consideration.)

(1) Announcement of Vacancies. The Plan depends on the announcement of vacancies in order that VA CTAP eligibles have an opportunity to apply. Vacancy announcements should be forwarded for appropriate distribution to HRMOs at VA facilities in the local commuting area that have displaced and surplus employees. In those instances where vacancies are not announced, e.g., in anticipation of a reassignment within the facility, if well-qualified eligibles apply in a timely manner they must receive special, selection priority. Vacancies filled from VA facilities beyond the local commuting area must first be announced, unless such vacancies are filled through staffing actions not covered by 5 CFB, Part 330, Subpart F, §330.606(b). See Appendix B.

(2) Determining Well-Qualified. The responsible Human Resources Management Officer, in consultation with subject matter experts, as required, will make the determination of "well-qualified" for each eligible applicant under this program, using the criteria in Paragraph 5 (Definitions) of VA Directive 5330. This official will also notify eligibles of a determination of "not well-qualified", and maintain documentation of the basis for this determination.

AUGUST 1, 1996

(3) Notification Procedures. Employees will receive notification of their eligibility for special selection priority under this program with their specific notice of RIF separation, or in their Certification of Expected Separation (CES) or other certification issued by the agency which identifies the employee as being in an excess organization or occupation.

4. REEMPLOYMENT PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR SEPARATED VA EMPLOYEES. VA employees who receive a **specific RIF** notice of separation will be notified that they may register for the Reemployment Priority List (RPL). Registrants receive reemployment priority consideration for positions in the local **commuting area** at the same **grade** or lower than the position held at the time of separation. Registrants do not have to re-apply for specific vacancies as in the case with current surplus and displaced employees. Neither must they meet the test of "well-qualified." **Where** there is more than one Human Resource Management office in the commuting area, the **HRM** officers will establish local procedures for exchange of information and the maintenance of a consolidated RPL. All facilities in the commuting area are, consistent with 5 CFR 330, responsible for assuring RPL registrants receive reemployment priority consideration for all appropriate vacancies. If the selecting official tentatively nonselects appropriately referred RPL registrants, that official must obtain approval of the next higher level supervisor before considering candidates from outside the facility. Registrants who were formerly career-conditional tenured have one year of eligibility under the RPL program, those who were formerly career tenured have two years of eligibility.

5. SPECIAL SELECTION PRIORITY FOR DISPLACED CURRENT OR FORMER EMPLOYEES FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES. Displaced current or former employees from other Federal agencies will have selection priority under The **Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP)** when they apply through the OPM Federal Job Opportunities Board (**FJOB**) for VA vacancies at their current or former grade level or with no higher potential, and is within the local commuting area. VA facilities must place vacancies on the OPM FJOB whenever they decide to recruit outside VA. These employees or former employees who are determined to be well-qualified must be selected prior to the selection of reinstatement eligibles, transfer eligibles, **from a civil service register of eligibles or from other competitive sources.** Such employees or former employees have eligibility for one year following separation under reduction in force procedures. They will be informed of the procedures of ICTAP and their eligibility for it when they receive their specific notices of separation.

6. ANNUAL REPORTS. Human Resources Management Officers are responsible for timely submission of an annual report, RCS OS-0910 VA **CTAP/ICTAP** Fiscal Year Activity Report covering each fiscal year's activity to reach the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management by no later than December 1. Each Report will include the following:

- a. The number of employees identified as displaced and surplus during that fiscal year;
- b. The number of selections of eligible employees under the facility's CTAP;
- c. The number of eligible employees determined to be "not well-qualified";

- d. The number of selections of eligible employees from other Federal agencies;
- e. The number of selections of other employees **from** other Federal agencies who are not displaced, and;
- f. The number of selections from outside the Federal Government.

7. LABOR RELATIONS BESPOESIBILITIES. This handbook has been developed in partnership with VA unions. These policies and procedures are not intended to affect existing collective bargaining agreements. The parties to such agreements, however, are **free to negotiate** those provisions that may be **affected**. Local management shall meet its **labor-management obligations at the local level** prior to implementation of local Career Transition Assistance Plans.

8. EMPLOYEE BESPOESIBILITIES **AND RIGHTS**. Employees must exercise individual initiative in pursuing other employment both within or outside the Federal Government. In order **to exercise** Special Selection Priority, eligible individuals must apply for specific vacancies in which they are interested with proof of their eligibility. A determination of **"not well-qualified"** is subject to a Qualification Review by the responsible Human Resources Management Officer upon request by the otherwise eligible applicant. Further dispute regarding such determination may be considered under appropriate procedures.

AUGUST 1, 1996

VA **HANDBOOK** 5330
APPENDIX A**ORDER OF SELECTION AND CONSIDERATION**

The following is to be used when filling a competitive service vacancy under the VA Career Transition **Assistance** Plan (VA CTAP), the Reemployment Priority List (RPL), and the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP).

Exceptions: Any of those 18 exceptions listed in Appendix B may be taken without regard to the selection procedures under VA CTAP, which applies to selections from within VA. Otherwise, the following order applies:

1. Selection of a **displaced or surplus VA employee in the local commuting area**, who applies within the prescribed timeframe for a **vacancy** at the same or lower grade with the same promotion potential and is determined to **be well-qualified**, then;

a. Consideration of a qualified employee from within the facility under the **Priority Placement Program For Employees in Retained Grade or Pay Status (PPP)** [refer to MP-5, Part 1, Chapter 300, Appendix C] and **any facility-wide special placement programs**, then;

Exceptions: Any of those 9 exceptions listed in Appendix C may be taken without regard to the selection procedures under the RPL or ICTAP, which apply to selections from outside of NA. Otherwise, the following order applies:

3. Consideration of qualified Reemployment Priority List (**RPL**) registrants in the local commuting area, then;

4. Selection of any qualified current VA employee from within or outside of the facility, **then**;

5. Selection of a **current or former well-qualified displaced Federal employee from another agency** in the local commuting area who applies within the prescribed timeframe under the Interagency Career Transition **Assistance** Plan (ICTAP), **then**;

6. Selection of any other **candidate from outside of the agency**, including selection from an OPM Certificate of Eligibles, a reinstatement eligible, a transfer from another agency, a noncompetitive appointment, such as, under the Outstanding Scholar Provision of the Luevano Consent Decree, or any other routine competitive staffing action.

AUGUST 1, 1996

VA HANDBOOK 5330
APPENDIX B

SELECTION ACTIONS NOT COVERED BY 5 CFB, PART 330,
SUBPART F, §330.606(b)

Selection under any of these staffing actions is not covered by 5 CFR, Part 330, Subpart F, Agency Career Transition Assistance Plans (CTAP) for Local Surplus and Displaced Employees, §330.606(b)

1. Placement of an agency employee through reassignment, change to lower grade, or promotion when no employees eligible under this subpart apply;
2. Reemployment of a former agency employee exercising regulatory or statutory Reemployment rights;
3. Position changes resulting from reclassification actions;
4. Temporary appointments of under 90 days (including extensions);
5. Exchange of positions between or among agency employees, when the actions involve no increase in grade or promotion potential;
6. Conversion of an employee on an excepted appointment which confers eligibility for noncompetitive conversion into the competitive service;
7. Placement activities under Part 351;
8. Placement of an employee into a new position as a result of a reorganization, when the former position ceases to exist, and no actual vacancy results;
- 9.. Placements made under the Intergovernmental Personnel ACT (IPA) as provided in Part 334 where they are for critical situations where the failure to make the assignment would substantially harm Federal interests, such as providing training for State takeover of a Federal program;
10. The filling of a position through an excepted appointment;
11. Details;
12. Time-limited promotions of under 90 days;
13. Noncompetitive movement of surplus of displaced employees;
14. Movement of excepted service employees within an agency;
15. A placement under 5 U.S.C. 8337 or 8451 to allow continued employment of an employee who has become unable to provide useful and efficient service in his or her current position because of a medical condition;
16. A placement that is a "reasonable offer" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 8336(d) and 8414(b);
17. Career-ladder promotions, and;
18. Recall of seasonal employees from nonpay status.

AUGUST 1, 1996

VA HANDBOOK 5330 ,
APPENDIX C

SELECTION ACTIONS NOT COVERED BY 5 CFR, PART 330,
SUBPART G, §330.705(c)

Selection under any of these staffing actions is not covered under 5 CFB, Part 330, Subpart G, Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) for Displaced Employees, §330.705(c)

1. Selections from VA's CTAP or RPL as described in 5 CFR , Part 330, Subparts F and B or any other internal movement of current VA employees;
2. Appointments of severely disabled 30% or more veterans;
3. Reemployment of former VA employees who have regulatory or statutory reemployment rights;
4. Temporary appointments of under 90 days;
5. An action taken under 5 CFR, Part 351;
6. The filling of a position by an excepted appointment;
7. Conversions of employees on excepted appointments that confer eligibility for noncompetitive conversion into the competitive service;
8. Noncompetitive movement of displaced employees between agencies or employees moved as a result of reorganization or transfer of function, and;
9. Placement of injured workers receiving workers compensation benefits.